

Tmesipteris lanceolata
Tmesipteris tannensis
Trichomanes endlicherianum

Trichomanes reniforme
Trichomanes venosum

Field Trip: Taranaki/Egmont National Park. 27/03/05

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As the mountain was nearly clear of cloud at breakfast time, we decided to proceed with Plan A which was to drive to the carpark at the end of the Stratford access road and walk to the herbfield from there. But we would take wet weather gear and be ready to formulate a Plan B if need be. As it turned out we did everything we wanted to in spite of the weather.

First off we met Barry and Ian at the carpark at the appointed time. The trip from the park boundary had given us a glimpse of the rimu/rata/kamahai forest, giving way to 'goblin forest'; at the carpark this was replaced by shrubby growth dominated by leatherwood (*Brachyglottis elaeagnifolia*) interspersed with *Dracophyllum filifolium*. Inspection of the subcanopy and turf revealed many treasures. *Muehlenbeckia axillaris* was flowering (and further up, in fruit). We saw *Astelia fragrans* with berries, *Ourisia macrophylla* with dead flower heads. Many *Coprosma* plants had bright berries; (*C. pseudocuneata*, *C. sp. "t"*, *C. perpusilla*). *Pratia angulata* had flowers and berries, *Gaultheria antipoda* had berries, *Raoulia glabra* was flowering, *R. tenuicaulis* was not. *Gunnera monoica* had berries. Unfamiliarity with *Pseudopanax colensoi* and *Raukaua simplex* led to much discussion. Visitors to Egmont needed help, as also with identification of *Hebe odora* and *Hebe stricta* var. *egmontiana*.

The track to the ski field shelter climbs and bends through the avalanche prone Manganui Gorge where notices warn the traveller to proceed quickly; but the profusion of herbs proved too much for the serious botanists. Only a very wet rain shower encouraged a faster speed, so that by lunchtime we were all at the shelter for lunch.

Some of the 'goodies' were: *Celmisia major* var. *brevis* (Egmont daisy), *Euphrasia cuneata* (these both flowering), *Coriaria plumosa* thick with black berries, *Wahlenbergia* sp. in flower, *Forstera bidwillii* with dead flowers, plenty of *Chionochloa rubra* with flower heads, *Sticherus* sp., *Blechnum penna-marina*, an

Aciphylla, possibly *A. colensoi* and the moss *Polytrichadelphus magellanicus* with capsules.

Fauna, apart from botanists and day trippers: a yellow admiral butterfly, a shiny dark bronze coloured beetle, a pipit in the gorge, faecal pellets indicating the presence possibly of hares.

After lunch we descended to the Potaema Bog ('bog': a mire with relatively acidic infertile water confined by underlying peat). A track suitable for wheelchairs is being constructed through the forest enroute to the bog and once there, access is by boardwalk. On the fifteen minute walk in it is obvious that heavy rainfall and moderate altitude (670m a.s.l.) have encouraged lush growth and great variety. We found several *Coprosma*, all in berry: *C. areolata*, *C. tenuifolia*, *C. grandifolia*; just to confuse us, *Alseuosmia pusilla*, also with red berries; *Raukaua anomalus*, *Schefflera digitata*; *Libertia micrantha*; a tiny version of *Pratia angulata*. There were also ferns; the ubiquitous *Asplenium bulbiferum*, less common *Leptopteris superba*, *Blechnum colensoi*, *Cyathea smithii*. The tree orchids *Winika cunninghamii* and *Earina autumnalis* were present, the latter obvious by its highly perfumed flower.

Botanising in the bog had to be from the boardwalk but we compiled a list of the most common plants. *Lepidosperma australe*, *Gahnia xanthocarpa*, *Baumea rubiginosa*, *Dracophyllum filifolium*, *Astelia grandis*, *Phormium tenax*, *Pseudopanax crassifolius*, *Leucopogon fasciculatus*, *Sphagnum* sp., *Leptospermum scoparium*, *Coprosma rhamnoides*, *Coprosma* sp. "t", *Potamogeton suboblongus*, *Euphrasia cuneata*. We did not see the blue *Thelymitra* or the sundew *Drosera binata* which are only visible in spring and summer.

Finally we returned to our Dawson Falls base through Taranaki farmland (with one magnificent cabbage tree on the roadside) and through 8 km of goblin forest to a well deserved scrumptious Bot Soc dinner.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Barry Hartley for so willingly sharing his immense knowledge of Taranaki flora and fauna.